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SUBJECT: POLICING AND SECURITY IN SOUTHERN IRAQ

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SUMMARY  
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1. The primary concern for Iraqis throughout the southern region continues to be security. The security situation is improving gradually due to the efforts of Coalition forces to establish new Iraqi police forces, but much work remains. The lack of adequate resources or clear guidelines for local units managing policing initiatives has led to great inconsistency in the structures and activities in each city or town. In An Nasiriyah former police officers within Coalition units are recruiting a local police force drawn mostly from former police and limited in size by the ability of Coalition patrols to monitor the activities of local police. In Basrah, Coalition military police (MP) are conducting joint patrols with unarmed local recruits that have little to no police training. In Al Amarah, Coalition MPs are using a similar model as in Basrah with additional security provided by two local Marsh Arab militias. In other towns, local leaders have declined offers of assistance from Coalition forces and are self-policing. The success of local policing initiatives is dependent on the development of an adequate legal system to provide the rules under which police may function. If civil unrest is to be avoided, these stopgap measures must be followed quickly by more systematic management of local security and justice issues that builds on local initiatives already in place. End Summary.

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POLICING IN AN NASIRIYAH  
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2. The original police force in An Nasiriyah (including traffic police) was close to 3,000 people. Through conversations with re-recruited police, Coalition forces have concluded that policing was a default profession for many men who could not find other jobs. As of 2 May, the new police force was comprised of approximately 300 men who were registered and accepted by the Coalition in conjunction with the town council to serve as policemen. They were still unarmed, but Coalition forces had plans to arm the police once they felt more comfortable with the recruits they had selected. Many more men wanted to register but Coalition forces did not have the capacity to monitor a larger group. The Coalition was slowly trying to vet the new recruits through interviews and other checks against intelligence information. Several former policemen serving with the Coalition forces controlling the town volunteered to help with the recruitment and training of this police force. Though policing was not their primary responsibility, these former police stepped in as the driving force behind the reactivation of local policing in An Nasiriyah.

3. One Coalition officer reported that his troops conducting patrols in the town were spread very thin. He said that his one battalion was covering an area that would normally be controlled by three battalions. The four companies within his battalion were each assigned a section of the town to patrol every two hours. House to house searches for weapons were completed and many weapons were confiscated and destroyed. However, many private citizens still have guns.

4. While Coalition patrols had not been fired upon in the last weeks of April, they reported continued shooting among the local population. The shooting appeared to be isolated, and Coalition forces attributed it to low-level crime or "score-settling" between individuals or families. Citizens reported incidents to Coalition forces either on patrol or

at the police station. For example, on 1 May, a woman came to the police station and reported that four days prior, seven men entered her home at night and shot her husband and son. Both men had returned from hospital and were recovering from their bullet wounds. She gave Coalition forces a list of individuals she thought were responsible, and it included two of the newly recruited police. Coalition forces are investigating this particular incident, but this illustrates the problem of recourse for victims against police or other authority figures once the Coalition forces pull out.

15. The scope of the violence remains limited in An Nasiriyah to individual incidents and has not become widespread between larger groups within the town. However, the number of incident reports received from the population and the general level of fear in the town increased over the three days prior to the DART visit on 2 May. This increase corresponded to the release of approximately 100 enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) into An Nasiriyah each day over the previous three days. Though unable to confirm whether the release of EPWs back into the town was the cause of the increased fear among the population, Coalition forces are concerned that some of the newly released EPWs were trying to reinsert themselves in the town through fear. While the population continues to be reassured by their presence, Coalition forces are concerned about a security vacuum when they leave in a few months.

16. Local leaders in the smaller towns around An Nasiriyah have told Coalition forces that they want to police themselves. When offered assistance in policing, local leaders have refused the assistance and said they prefer to handle community security on their own. These small towns are reportedly "taking care of" the local Fedayeen themselves as well.

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POLICING IN BASRAH  
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17. There were 6,000 police officers in Basrah before the conflict. After the serious and widespread looting throughout Basrah toward the end of April, the Coalition military police (MPs) began an initiative to recruit and train a new local police force. They have compiled a database of over 2,000 names of applicants. The Coalition is validating individuals through a system of intelligence checks and interviews with the applicants and others in the town. They are beginning to further organize the force into units with approximately 700 regular police participating in joint patrols with the Coalition MPs and troops as on-the-job training. On 10 May, 460 traffic police joined a 500-person "guard" force to protect important stationary infrastructure. In addition to the police force, the Coalition MPs have begun a licensing process for private security guards. There are now four police stations open in Basrah city and three others in surrounding areas.

18. Applicants to the police force are a mixture of former police and new recruits. While the majority are former police, the higher-level officers in the former force have disappeared and the returning recruits are from the lower levels and often had jobs not directly related to policing. The Coalition MP providing the description of the training initiative to the DART said the former police force had many drivers, administrators, and cleaners, but very few employees actually involved in proper police responses and investigations. Therefore, most of the recruits, whether new recruits or former police, need basic police training. Recruits are participating in joint patrols with the Coalition troops and MPs for on-the-job training but the Coalition is still controlling and monitoring all activities closely. The MPs also have put together mobile training teams that visit the various stations and train approximately 20 people at a time in basic rules of evidence, use of force, etc. They also have plans for a police academy that can train and professionalize the new police force more formally, but they have not yet identified funding for this initiative.

19. The primary challenge to the training of new police is the lack of a basic legal system to regulate the police procedures. The lack of a legal system with judges and due process in place also presents challenges to the ability of the Coalition forces and local police to detain or process criminals. For now, low-level criminals such as petty looters are arrested, warned and released. If they find repeat offenders, they keep them longer but still have no means to process these individuals. Coalition forces are detaining perpetrators of 13 types of serious crime such as rape or murder, and sending them down to the EPW camp in Umm Qasr because there is nowhere locally to detain them. Reportedly, about 150 such detentions have taken place under Coalition authority.

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POLICING IN AL AMARAH  
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10. The policing efforts in Al Amarah are following the same model as in Basrah with one interesting difference. Residents of Al Amarah are very proud to refer to themselves as "self-liberated" since they expelled most of the Baath Party before the arrival of any Coalition forces. The chief of police, a former Baath Party member, changed sides to join those opposing the regime just a few days before this self-liberation took place. He is still the chief of police, and most of the existing local police force stayed in place wearing the same uniforms as before the conflict began. Two powerful Marsh Arab leaders from the 1991 uprising also have re-emerged with their own local militias, which participated in this "self-liberation" and are now helping to patrol and secure the town. Local leaders, including the militias, have accepted Coalition oversight, and Coalition forces have told them that there is no place in Iraq for militias in the future. For now though, these armed militias that wear civilian clothes are helping with security by manning checkpoints and providing an expanded security coverage in the town. As a result, Al Amarah has had fewer problems with security and crime than other places. Looting and damage to government buildings was limited to about two days before coalition forces arrived.

11. There may be troubling long-term implications, however, of relying on a militia to supplement the joint patrols by Coalition troops and civilian police. It may be difficult to get the militias to give up power. In Al Amarah a new local judicial structure is well on the way to establishment by local lawyers that have elected new judges. They have issued proclamations on their desires for a new justice system in that Governorate. If supported and strengthened, this local initiative appears to have the potential to create checks on power consolidation in the town. The judges and lawyers are awaiting authorization and legitimacy to be granted for their proposed system from the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) in Baghdad. Details on this emerging legal structure will be reported via septel.

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PAYMENT OF POLICE AND OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE SOUTH  
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12. Another critical need related to the new local police forces is the payment of salaries. Along with all civil servants, new police are eager to receive their salaries. Due to the delay in getting a national scheme for the payment of civil servants in place, Coalition forces are trying to solve the problem. In An Nasiriyah, the new town council identified state money in a local bank that they authorized the Coalition to use to pay salaries of approximately 50,000 civil servants in the governorate. They were using a pay scale of USD 10 equivalent for unskilled labor, USD 15 for skilled labor, and a maximum of USD 22 for managerial positions. The exchange rate used was 1400 Iraqi dinar per dollar. The police were the first of the civil servants to be paid in early May. Coalition forces estimated they had enough Iraqi dinars to pay two months' worth of salaries for all the civil servants in the Governorate. They turned money over to the heads of individual departments for disbursement to their staff. Similarly Coalition forces have identified local cash reserves in banks and used them to pay initial salaries to police in Basrah.

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CONCLUSION  
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13. Important issues related to providing needed security in Iraq including policing, paying civil servant salaries, protecting sensitive documents and physical evidence, developing local judicial structures, and rebuilding social infrastructure are being addressed through the creative efforts of local units of the Coalition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and emerging local Iraqi leadership. While these initiatives are addressing the most pressing needs for now, none are adequate or sustainable over the medium- to long-term without support. The legal parameters developing in the broader system in Baghdad should be communicated to the military units and local leaders in the various Governorates working on policing and local justice. Such guidance should encourage these emerging local initiatives in the right direction toward a locally driven, yet consistent system of security and justice for the new Iraq.